

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0925

S E C R E T SEOUL 9692

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR PINT KS US

SUBJ: KIM SANG KEUN CASE

(CONFIDENTIAL) SUMMARY: A "HIGH RANKING KOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL" ISSUED STATEMENT CONCERNING KIM SANG KEUN CASE. AMBASSADOR AND DCM PROTESTED NATURE AND TIMING OF RELEASE. END SUMMARY.

1. (CONFIDENTIAL) AFTER LENGTHY DELAY, EMBASSY FINALLY MANAGED TO OBTAIN COPY OF A STATEMENT ISSUED BY "A HIGH RANKING KOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL" VERY LATE ON DECEMBER 8. THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT, WHICH AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE WAS ISSUED ON WHITE BOND PAPER WITH NO LETTERHEAD, IS AS FOLLOWS:

(UNCLASSIFIED) "STATEMENT BY A HIGH RANKING KOREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ON COUNSELLOR KIM SANG KEUN'S CASE."

"THE KOREAN SIDE STRONGLY DEMANDS THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES TO REINSTATE COUNSELLOR KIM SANG KEUN'S PHYSICAL FREEDOM IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICES.

"THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS HAS REPEATEDLY REQUESTED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE COUNSELLOR KIM'S PHYSICAL FREEDOM AND TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KOREAN EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES.

"THE UNITED STATES HAS SO FAR FAILED TO REPLY TO THIS REQUEST. IT HAS EVEN WITHHELD INFORMATION ON COUNSELLOR KIM'S PRESENT WHERE-

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ABOUTS, AND HIS FAMILY HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY

AGENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES.

"THE KOREAN SIDE HAS FOUND NO GROUND TO BELIEVE THAT COUNSELLOR KIM 'CHOSE TO STAY IN THE UNITED STATES OF HIS OWN FREE WILL', AS ALLEGED BY THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES.

"WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE ALLEGATIONS AT THEIR FACE VALUE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE PROPOSED INTERVIEW WITH MR. KIM BY THE KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT BEEN REALIZED AND EVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASCERTAIN HIS FREE WILL HAS NOT BEEN ACCORDED.

"SHOULD THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES OF THE UNITED STATES FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUEST FOR A PROMPT RELEASE OF COUNSELLOR KIM, THEY WILL BE SUBJECT TO SUSPICION THAT THEY HAVE PLACED MR. KIM WITH DIPLOMATIC STATUS UNDER FORCED DETENTION, AND WILL HARDLY AVOID INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM."

2. (CONFIDENTIAL) WE BELIEVE THAT THE AUTHOR WAS KIM SEONG-JIN, MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION.

3. (SECRET) IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF COPY, AMBASSADOR AND DCM PROTESTED BOTH CONTENT AND TIMING OF ISSUANCE TO FOREIGN MINISTER AND VICE MINISTER RESPECTIVELY. AMBASSADOR MADE HIS VIEWS KNOWN IN STRONG TERMS, POINTING OUT THE INACCURACIES (E.G., "THE UNITED STATES HAS SO FAR FAILED TO REPLY TO THIS REQUEST"), AND THE UNFORTUNATE TONE OF THE STATEMENT. HE TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER THAT STATEMENT COULD ONLY DAMAGE THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO SOLVE THE KIM PROBLEM AND IN LIGHT OF THAT EFFECT, ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO EITHER WITHDRAW THE STATEMENT OR AT LEAST ISSUE AN AMENDMENT CORRECTING THE FACTUAL ERRORS. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER THE REQUEST ON THURSDAY.  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, KS, US, KCIA, (KIM SANG KEUN)  
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